

Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-03 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 DPW-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2651

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USMISSION USUN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, PFOR, PK, IN, BG

SUBJ: EXCHANGE OF BENGALLEES, NON-BENGALLEES AND PAK POW'S

REF: ISLAMABAD 10870

SUMMARY: PAKS HAVE ASKED UNSYG TP PERMIT USE OF UNHCR AIRLIFT IN REPATRIATING PAK POW'S IN INDIA, MOVEMENT OF WHICH NOW STYMIED BY INDIAN RAIL STRIKE. GOP ENVISAGES CONTINUATION OF AIRLIFT FOR THIS PURPOSE AFTER MOVEMENT OF BENGALLEES FROM PAKISTAN TO BANGLADESH IS COMPLETED IN FEBRUARY. PAKS CONCERNED THAT "SIMULTANEITY" OF THREE-WAY EXCHANGE SPECIFIED BY DELHI AGREEMENT HAS BEEN UPSET BY COMPLETE CESSATION POW RETURN FOR PAST TEN DAYS, RESULTING IN SHORTFALL OF 8500 IN SCHEDULED REPATRIATIONS SO FAR. END SUMMARY.

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1. PRESS HAS REPORTED PAK REQUEST TO UNSYG FOR USE OF UNHCR AIRLIFT TO REPATRIATE PAK POW'S FROM INDIA, MOVEMENT OF WHOM HAS BEEN SUSPENDED COMPLETELY FOR PAST TEN DAYS BY INDIAN RAILWAY STRIKE. FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRGEN FOR SOUTH ASIA, ABDUL SATTAR, CONFIRMED TO POL COUNSELOR DECEMBER 28 THAT MINSTATE AZIZ AHMED HAD SENT REQUEST TO UNSYG "IN SUPPORT OF THE REQUEST INDIA IS SAID TO HAVE MADE" FOR EMPLOYMENT OF THE UNHCR-CHARTERED AIRCRAFT IN THIS TASK.

2. AS SATTAR EXPLAINED IT, GOP IS NOT THINKING PRIMARILY OF UTILIZING SURPLUS CAPACITY OF HALF-FULL AIRCRAFT ON BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN FLIGHTS TO STOP IN INDIA AND PICK UP POW'S EN ROUTE BUT WAS SEEKING TO EMPLOY THE UNHCR AIRCRAFT ON WIDER SCALE. SATTAR CLAIMED THAT, IN ANY EVENT, THERE WAS LITTLE ACTUAL UNFILLED CAPACITY IN EAST-WEST LEG OF UNHCR FLIGHTS AT PRESENT BECAUSE MOVEMENT OF BENGALLEES TO BANGLADESH, NOW MORE THAN SIXTY PERCENT COMPLETE, WAS TAPERING OFF AND TRANSFER OF NON-BENGALLEES TO PAKISTAN WAS CONTINUING AT STEPPED-UP PACE. WHAT GOP HOPED WAS THAT UNHCR WOULD CONTINUE TO OPERATE CHARTER FLEET AFTER BENGALLEE REPATRIATION COMPLETED IN FEBRUARY, USING AIRCRAFT TO MOVE POW'S FROM INDIA AS WELL AS NON-BENGALLEES FROM BANGLADESH. GOP CALCULATED THAT UNHCR SHOULD HAVE FUNDS FOR THIS, SINCE UNHCR OBTAINED FUNDS FOR THE THREE-WAY EXCHANGE ON BASIS ORIGINAL ESTIMATE OF 150,000 BENGALLEES TO BE TRANSPORTED FROM PAKISTAN TO BANGLADESH, AN OVER-ESTIMATE OF TWENTY-ODD THOUSAND. THIS, GOP HOPES, SHOULD PERMIT REPATRIATION EQUIVALENT NUMBER POW'S FROM INDIA WITHIN SAME BUDGET.

3. ACCORDING SATTAR, TOTAL OF 73,000 BENGALLEES HAVE BEEN REPATRIATED TO BANGLADESH THROUGH DECEMBER 27 AND APPROXIMATELY 31,000 NON-BENGALLEES HAVE ARRIVED PAKISTAN FROM BANGLADESH. TOTAL NUMBER POW'S REPATRIATED FROM INDIA HAS REMAINED AT 37,400 SINCE MOVEMENT SUSPENDED DUE RAIL STRIKE. SATTAR EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN OVER INCREASING LAG IN POW RETURN, POINTING OUT THAT BY DECEMBER 30 NUMBER REPATRIATED WILL HAVE FALLEN 8500 SHORT OF REPATRIATION SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED BY GOI LAST MONTH, AND THAT EVEN THIS SCHEDULE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FAILED MOVE POW'S FAST ENOUGH TO PROVIDE THE "SIMULTANEITY" AGREED TO IN DELHI AGREEMENT. HE SAID GOP UNDERSTOOD INCUMBENT ON INDIANS TO DO CONSIDERABLY BETTER JOB OF POW REPATRIATION ONCE THEY HAD SOLVED THEIR INTERNAL TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTIES. BYROADE

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